

RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

"PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."—Paul.

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DOCTRINAL.

FOR THE RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

REMARKS ON 1 JOHN III, 9.

"Whoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

Various opinions have been entertained, by christians, concerning the import of these words. Some supposing that they imply simply that sin is not the fruit of the divine spirit, or occasioned by its influences; that so far as man may be said to be born of God, by cultivating the affections so strongly recommended in the gospel, so far he will avoid sin; and so far as he is under the influence of the spirit of God, so far he cannot sin. Others have imagined that these words must be understood in a sense strictly literal; that whoever is born of God cannot commit the least sin; and have drawn the conclusion, that since no man is free from sin in this world, therefore no man is born of God, while in the flesh.

We shall not at this time attempt to decide which of the above opinions is nearest the truth; but shall notice a third opinion on the subject, which, to us, appears somewhat singular. We have heard it seriously contended that we are to understand, by the words which head these remarks, that sin is not imputed to those who are born of God; that although such may, in some instances, transgress the commandments of God, and be guilty of that, which in the "world's people" would be sin, still God is pleased to overlook it in them, as the effect of the weakness of human nature, and regard it not as sin. This is truly a very comfortable idea; one which doubtless affords wonderful consolation to the favored subjects of God's discriminating grace. For in this case, if they chance to be guilty of any abominable vice, they can comfort themselves with considering that they *feel* that they are born of God, and consequently cannot commit sin; and that therefore this vice may be considered a mere *slip*, not a *sin*. This idea may have had its influence on many men. For instance, when King David found it convenient to be rid of Uriah, that he might have undisturbed enjoyment

of Bathsheba, it was the easiest thing in the world for him to direct Joab to place him where the battle waxed hottest, and balance the account with his conscience by reflecting that since he was born of God, this would not be considered a sin, nor be imputed to him as such; but that it was merely occasioned by the workings of the old Adam, and would be passed by, in mercy, and in regard to his heavenly birth and virtues.

Again, on a certain time, in order to obtain a blessing from Isaac, Jacob adopted the expedient of dressing himself in the garments of Esau, and solemnly assuring his father that he was his "very Son Esau." Now had this been done by an unregenerated person, it would have been accounted a base crime, deserving exemplary chastisement. But in this case, as Jacob was a favored son of Heaven, and, as Esau was one of the reprobates, and therefore not entitled to the favor of God or man,—this procedure was so far from being sinful, that it was perfectly justifiable; or at most, a venial *slip*.

And in latter days this idea doubtless comforted Calvin, when he "exterminated Servetus;" the Protestant clergy, when they burned the Dissenters; the Orthodox, when they hung the inoffensive Quakers; and we might particularize some in our own day, but we forbear. We merely state in close, that we apprehend some good people, who cherish hopes of escaping the consequences of sin with impunity, on account of having been regenerated, will find to their consternation, that "he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and that there is no respect of persons."

LUCIUS.

FOR THE RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY.

Mr. Editor,—In a former No.* of your paper, some extracts appeared from the address of the President of the American Tract Society. I now send you their Platform, or foundation principles. It will be perceived to differ from the Saybrook Platform, in rejecting, utterly and absolutely, the Calvinistic doctrine of election and reprobation. As this purports to be the sense of five different denominations, it is fair to infer, that henceforth it is orthodoxy, and every departure from it, heterodoxy. How far this coalition will succeed in extinguishing the light of truth in our favoured country, is to be tested by experiment. That such heterogeneous materials will succeed in their attempts to shackle the free-born mind is less likely.

* See No. 17, present vol.

than that like the toes of the image, they will crumble with their own weight, and want of cohesion. That man must be credulous indeed, who can for a moment believe, that a great majority of the different denominations in the United States can so soon forget their *essential* and *non-essential* differences, or that they can possibly amalgamate, but for the purpose of giving their honour and power to the *Beast*.

The Episcopalian follows the Catholic relative to *regeneration*.—He holds that this consists in *baptism*. The first name, on the list of the publishing committee, is that of James Milnor, formerly a lawyer of considerable reputation in Philadelphia, of very easy address, and strong powers of moral suasion. Will he—will the Episcopal church *en masse*, give up this old established principle? Time will tell.

Gardiner Spring, the next on the list, is a Hopkinsian, & in the doctrine of election, a true disciple of John Calvin. His words are—"if they are not elected, they will indeed perish." How he can agree with "the free and full offers of the gospel, and the duty of men to accept it," is also to be seen by the result.

Charles G. Somers is a Baptist. If he should be one of Dr. John Gill's disciples, he can no more agree with Mr. Milnor, than vinegar with oil. In baptism, he must be alone against four. If the lines of Pope be not applicable here, I know not where they can be—

'What each of other, oft is sure to cost,

How each for other oft is *wholly* lost.'

Of the others, John Knox, and Justin Edwards, little is known by the writer. One is believed to be a Presbyterian, and the other a Dutch Reformed. If the tracts should entirely exclude any thing peculiar to either of the churches from which they are a committee, they must be a literary curiosity indeed, and something which would answer Solomon's question relative to the white of an egg. Should it be otherwise, they violate their pledge publicly given, and must expose this modern Babel to certain destruction. As neither of these sects found itself able to arrest the progress of the truth, their united forces are now coalesced, and the event will prove, whether this union of *numbers*, will be able to retard the steady and glorious advance of light. Those who have watched the progress of mind, will take courage on reflecting, that its steps do not retrograde, and that strength is not always measured by numbers. But it is time to give you the manifesto of these guardians of this new, national system of orthodoxy.

"Man's native sinfulness—the purity and obligation of the law of God—the true and proper Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ—the necessity and reality of his atonement and sacrifice—the efficiency of the Holy Spirit in the work of renovation—the free and full offers of the Gospel and the duty of men to accept it—the necessity of personal holiness—as well as an everlasting state of rewards and punishments beyond the grave:—these are doctrines dear to our hearts, and constitute the basis of our union."

Those who know that the various systems of *atonement*, can no more amalgamate than fire and water, and are no nearer alike than light and darkness, may be tempted to inquire, what system will be their pattern. It may be suggested too, that between the opposing systems of the churches represented in this Society, a very material difference is apparent, as to the *causes* of "rewards and punishments beyond the grave." As this, however, is one of the items *dear to their hearts*, it is possible they will find a mode of expression, fitted in some form, to retain this relic of Paganism. X.



RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1825.

"Earnestly contend for the faith."

IMITATION OF GOD.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.—Eph. v. 1.

Man at his birth comes into an untried world, full of moral and physical danger, on which account, he is in the greatest need of the best instruction for the government of his heart and life, and the most perfect example for his constant guidance and imitation. To remove his ignorance and supply him with the light of life, God has deigned to become his instructor in the great concern of salvation, and prescribed his temper and conduct as an unfailing directory through all the mazes of this world, through all the visitations of his merciful providence. He has assured man that he shall enjoy happiness in the same degree that he conforms to his Maker in feeling and conduct, and that he shall repose confidence in his Creator in the same measure that he loves, reveres and obeys him, not in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth. He has also declared that his misery shall be proportioned to his non-conformity to the love and teachings of Heaven, and that his dread and distrust of Perfection will be graduated by his misjudgment, and departure from the wisest instructions, and the fairest model of purity and bliss. All his commissioned apostles have repeated these truths in every age, conjuring man to be happy by imitating a Being infinitely satisfied with his attributes and felicity, and manifesting his unlimited benevolence and love of happiness by inviting all rational creatures to possess his moral likeness, to share in his joy. They have also pictured the misery necessarily attendant on a non-compliance with the lessons of wisdom, not only to dissuade the guilty from persevering in wrong, but to confirm the virtuous in the way of holiness by contrast and comparison, and to

solace their hearts amid their internal sorrows, temptations and conflicts, and the machinations, snares and violence of a besetting world. This course has been invariably pursued in all the communications of Heaven, neither God nor his messengers presenting any Exemplar but Perfection for the imitation of man, nor promising happiness but in conforming to this universal standard. Had another example been urged, imperfection would be commended by the highest authority, and God would evidence dissatisfaction with himself, or a disposition to engross all enjoyment. But God, feeling the completest happiness in his nature and character, has no love for misery, and therefore can recommend no pattern but himself for the imitation of his creatures. And in this commendation he evinces the great love he has for perfection, and the strong paternal regard he cherishes for the ignorant and miserable children of men. With this view of God's temper and design, of man's blindness, and constant exposure to error and crime, without an infallible guide, let us investigate the doctrines of the church, and see how they quadrate with the incontestable principles of revelation which have been already portrayed.

One hypothesis maintains that God hath chosen a certain number of the race of Adam, before the foundation of the world, unto eternal glory, of his free grace and love, without the least foresight of faith, good works, or any conditions performed by the creature; and that he was pleased to pass by the rest of mankind, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for the praise of his vindictive justice. It also maintains that mankind are totally depraved through the sin of the first man, and that this corruption pervades the whole soul, rendering it *unable to turn to God, or to do any thing truly good*, and exposing it to his righteous displeasure both in this world and that which is to come; yet it contends a loud and sincere call is made to all men, and that the fault is neither in God, Christ, nor the Spirit, if they do not come, but entirely their own, though none can comply with the invitation, but those who are *irresistibly* influenced by the power of God. Should this scheme truly depict the feeling and purpose of God concerning our race, each man is authorized to select a certain number of the human family, to promote them to riches and honor, of his free grace and love, without the least foresight of integrity, compassion, or good works, or any conditions performed by them, and to pass by the rest, heaping on them all the miseries he can impose, or they bear, to the praise of his vindictive justice. This, though an exact counterpart of the above hypothesis, has invariably received the execration of all christians, and particularly christian ministers, when it has appeared in the conduct of tyrants and usurpers, or of lawful kings and governors, although in judging them, the Being whom they imitated was condemned. It is totally immaterial whether the resemblance were accidental or intended, no lover of God being dissatisfied with his moral image, wherever found, or however superinduced. By the reduction of

this theory to practice, fraud, cruelty, oppression, insincerity, robbery, murder will receive the most ample justification, as the person who causes tears and blood to flow, and scatters misery about him with an unsparing hand will allege that he, striving to imitate God, has passed by these suffering wretches, and ordained them to dishonor and wrath, to the praise of his vindictive justice. Hence the active and unrestrained operation of this scheme, which professes to assimilate man to God, would sunder every ligament of brotherhood, and convert the earth into one great field of slaughter, cannibalism and horror through all its plains and mountains, or reduce the human family to dark and implacable misanthropy.

Another, and a crowning part of this system is found in God's apparently sincere and merciful call of those he has ordained to dishonor and wrath, when their total depravity prevents compliance, and their inability to obey the invitation is made to aggravate their utter perdition. When Paul would persuade his Roman brethren to feel the temper and display the conduct of the God they served before their heathen persecutors, he exhorts them to possess love without dissimulation, to abhor that which is evil and to cleave to that which is good; and to the Ephesians he says, be ye imitators of God, as beloved children. But if the heartlessness of the above doctrine be chargeable on God, or rather if he have devised a plan as full of duplicity and vengeance as the one assigned him, the apostle was unacquainted with the true God, or he was deceitful and inconsistent like the being he preached. If the *sincere invitation* be, look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, or come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, none are *ordained* to dishonor and wrath, none are shut out from salvation. But if these invitations be perfectly hollow in reference to some, who are debarred by God's glory and decrees, and their own depravement and incapacity from obeying them, all the fraud, falsehood, perjury, deception, faithlessness and malignity of earth are fully warranted, as they resemble the conduct of God, and approximate perfection. Thus it is perceived that all the crimes which have been perpetrated on this planet might not only be palliated by this scheme, but entirely justified, as each offender could alledge in his defence the direction and example of God, an authority so high and conclusive that no human tribunal could treat it with neglect, unless perjury, injustice and misrule should pervade all by the warrant of Heaven, and moral chaos possess undivided empire of the universe.

However, it never can be a contestable position, that whoever has violated the *precepts* of God, and appealed to his *example* for justification, has never felt happiness in his own bosom, advanced the improvement of his race, or enjoyed confidence in Heaven; for whenever our hearts condemn, God approves the judgment, and when they justify, he affirms the decision. This fact completely destroys the above theory. As long as God possesses an omnipotent regard for truth, there can be no insecurity in believing

him when he says our happiness shall be measured by our resemblance of him, and our misery by our unlikeness. Every one therefore may understand the fallacy of election to eternal glory, and ordination to dishonor and wrath, coupled with an apparently sincere call to those doubly incapacitated from complying, by God's decree and their own depravity; for had God taken this course, man could imitate with pleasure and improvement, but experiment has proved beyond dispute that these doctrines can never be carried into practice without unmingled pain to the best minds. Indeed, they cannot reflect on them, in the unclouded light in which they are frequently presented, without sorrow, shuddering and the deepest astonishment at the *seeming* duplicity of the God of truth. Even Calvin, though snared in the web of his own spinning, had feeling and honesty enough to confess that God's purpose concerning the non-elect was a *horrible decree*. This hypothesis being most unacceptable and repulsive to pure and virtuous minds, and most flattering to the hardened sinner, it could not originate in a mind of immaculate purity, for in the same degree that men are freed from sin and conformed to holiness, its features become more odious, appalling and horrible. It is a tenet on which they dislike to converse while the love of God burns in their hearts, but one on which they dilate with peculiar satisfaction, when they have little but theory, to distinguish them from the common mass of sinners. This being a fact of the most common and undisputed occurrence, how can saints be holy or perfect like God, when they heartily feel increased opposition to the scheme of unconditional and irreversible exclusion of some, less sinful than themselves, from the joy of God? or how can ministers entreat their every hearer, and the whole world to which they may preach, to become godlike in temper and deed, when it is determined that a large part shall never grow better, but continue to increase in guilt and wretchedness forever? can these apostles of God desire the salvation of those whose ruin he has decreed, or are they deceitful in language, gesture and tender of felicity, as the above system makes their Sender? Whichever side of this great difficulty we attempt to defend, Calvinism, or the character of God must be sacrificed; and the question is put to the soul of every man, who has a heart to feel, or a head to speculate, what course shall be adopted in this deep concern? shall the *dicta* of Austin, the *metaphysics* of Beza, or the *articles* of Dort reverse the teachings of inspiration, or silence the voice of God? But if the scriptures have delineated the character and purpose of God according to the opinion of Augustine, or Athanasius, let no fashion, prejudice or law of man forbid or punish the horrid acts which would result from the closest imitation of the proposed model, unless the legislation of earth be superior to the direction, the law of Heaven. Yet let it be considered, if the Divines of Westminster have faithfully depicted the God of all excellence in their celebrated Catechisms, no worse effects could follow the most persevering imita-

tion of the heathen deities, sensual, capricious and revengeful as they were, than those which would arise from honestly copying the God of Calvinism, not only in feeling, but action. Choose ye then whom ye will resemble, and balance no longer between two or more opinions, when the glory of God, your own happiness and the moral and intellectual ennoblement of your race are staked on a right decision of this great question.

VULGAR ERRORS CORRECTED.

Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.—TRADITION.

This mutilated scripture is chosen for consideration, because many ingenuous minds have been much perplexed by the sentiments that have been deduced from it, and most unnecessarily disquieted by the wrong and ignorant application of this passage, which fanaticism has garbled. Through this examination let it be explicitly understood that we plead for repentance, and contend that gospel penitence is reformation, evidenced in change of feeling and conduct, and that there is no other repentance, but the sorrow that worketh death. With this explanation of the doctrine which the scriptures repeatedly inculcate with the greatest energy, and this description of worldly sorrow that worketh death, or leads its victim to despondency and the grave, no candid reader will misunderstand our remarks, or misapply our exposition. Luke xiii. 3, 5, are the texts on which this statement has been grounded, but with how much justice or discrimination we shall presently determine. From these words of Jesus men have been assured that unless they repented eternal damnation would be their fate, and that this declaration of Christ fully asserted this most alarming fact. They have consequently been warned to repent by all the horrors of a burning lake, not by the goodness of God, which leads to repentance, and the result has frequently been deplorable; for the poor wretches have shed a few burning tears of remorse, made solemn vows of amendment, and gone forward in the way of transgression with greater complacency, or they have sunk into despair, not unfrequently into a consumption, and mourned away their existence, or in the last place, they have recovered from their mental chaos and professed to be christians, though they acknowledge there is no pleasure in serving God, and that they were driven into religion, and are kept from leaving it by the dread of endless perdition. Against this course we enter our most solemn protest, and that the gospel may not be perverted to a purpose so destructive of health, reason and happiness, we shall give the true and primitive application of those texts which are cited from Luke.

At the time when Jesus spoke the words that have suffered by mutilation, there were some present who told him of the Gallileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus said, suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all *likewise* perish. Then he im-

mediately subjoins, or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all *likewise* perish. The persons, who related the tragic fate of the Galileans to Christ, seemed to imagine they were sinners above all the inhabitants of Galilee, because when they came to Jerusalem at the Feast, Pilate slew them at the altar, and mingled their blood with their sacrifices; but Christ corrects this mistake, and assures *them* that unless *they* repent, *they* should all *likewise* perish. This denunciation is confirmed and enforced by adverting to the calamity at Siloam, and in reference to that disaster, the same monition is given. The lesson deduced by Christ from all these facts and circumstances is, that if the Jews continued to reject him as the true Messiah and to persecute his disciples, they should perish in the *same manner* in which the Galileans and the inhabitants of Jerusalem had been destroyed. This was literally verified in the wars of Judea, and particularly in the siege of Jerusalem, when the factions, who kept the city in perpetual fear, as they flooded its streets with blood, and wrapt its dwellings in flames, carried their quarrel into the temple, slaughtered each the other on the altar, and thereby mingled the blood of him who sacrificed with his offering. The other portion of this prophecy received its fulfilment, when the towers of Jerusalem fell and crushed their defenders; an event that frequently happened during the investment of this great and strong city. That these texts have been rightly explained and truly applied is obvious from the word *likewise*, which Christ used to signify that the destruction of those who did not repent, or who continued to reject him, should be *like* that of the Galileans, or of the eighteen killed at Siloam. Whoever attempts to prove endless misery from this passage will find the weakness of his authority, or he must admit that Christ declared, unless men became penitent in this world, they should be slain with the sword, or crushed beneath falling towers in the world to come, or through eternity. Should any object to this remark, it is incumbent on them to give a rational and consistent meaning to *likewise*, or to grant that their opposition is groundless.

From this scripture we derive two important lessons.—

1. Men are most unwise and presuming, who fancy those who suffer great calamities are sinners above all men, because they are thus afflicted, and who imagine themselves righteous, because they have not been visited with any heavy misfortune. Let the mistake of those who mentioned to Jesus the catastrophe of the Galileans guard us all against similar misapprehensions, and incite us to a faithful examination of our own hearts, and a sincere reformation of our lives.

2. This subject teaches that unfeigned penitence, or newness of life will avert those perils and sufferings in which we shall be involved, if we continue in sin, and render us safe in a time of general destruction. This idea is well illustrated in the history of Christ's disciples, who

gave heed to the warnings of their Master, and left Judea before the close investment of Jerusalem, while the unbelievers and scoffers saw the signs of the times, and witnessed the vigilance of the christians, without imitating their circumspection, or learning wisdom from their safe and obedient conduct.

Let us then be particularly cautious not to suppose any sinners above all men, because they suffer great and repeated calamities, but sincerely repent of our own sins, and give evidence of the singleness of our own hearts by living in agreement with the teachings of Jesus.

WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES.

This famous Assembly, whose Confession of Faith and Catechisms have long been considered the standard of orthodoxy, met in the Chapel of King Henry the Seventh, on the first of July, 1643, and twenty-three years after our pilgrim fathers landed at Plymouth. The number originally appointed was one hundred and twenty, but sixty-nine only appeared and took part in the deliberations: The ordinance of the Lords and Commons for convening this Assembly says, that "whereas it hath been declared and resolved by the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, that the present church-government by Archbishops, Bishops &c. is evil,—and that therefore they are resolved the same shall be taken away, and that such a government shall be settled in the Church as may be most agreeable to God's Holy Word, and most apt to procure the peace of the Church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland, and other Reformed Churches abroad; and for the better effecting hereof, and for the vindicating and clearing the Doctrine of the Church of England from all false calumnies and aspersions, it is thought fit and necessary to call an assembly of *learned, godly, and judicious Divines, &c.*" According to Collier, among the first on the list of these godly divines, who were to frame a system of religious faith for the nation, were ten Earls, Viscounts and Lords, followed by a large number of the members of the House of Commons.—Next came the *Episcopal* men; none of whom assisted in the conference but Dr. Featly.—Then come the *Presbyterian* Divines; after them a smaller division, who had lately transported themselves to Holland to avoid the penalties of Nonconformity, and who finally settled down in *Independency*.

As the members of this assembly were nominated by the Knights of the Shires, two for each County; and as their avowed object was to subvert the Establishment and fix another in its place, it is more natural to suppose they were chosen for their hostility to the Bishops, than for their *learned* or *godly* qualifications. Milton, though violently attached to *independency* in church government, and consequently not entirely impartial, has given us an account of this celebrated assembly, which, as it is from a contemporary, and one personally acquainted with these *learned, godly and judicious Divines*, and well informed of

the circumstances in which they were chosen, shall be transcribed for the gratification of our readers.

"And if the state were in this plight, religion was not in much better : to reform which, a certain number of divines [a large proportion of whom were laymen] were called, neither chosen by any rule or custom ecclesiastical, nor eminent for either piety or knowledge above others left out; only as each member of parliament in his private fancy thought fit, so elected one by one. The most part of them were such as had preached and cried down, with great show of zeal, the avarice and pluralities of bishops and prelates; that one cure of souls was a full employment for one spiritual pastor how able soever, if not a charge rather above human strength. Yet these conscientious men (ere any part of the work done for which they come together, and that on the public salary) wanted not boldness, to the ignominy and scandal of their pastor-like profession, and especially of their boasted reformation, to seize into their hands, or not unwillingly to accept (besides one, sometimes two or more of the best livings) collegiate masterships in the universities, rich lectures in the city, setting sail to all winds that might blow gain into their covetous bosoms; by which means these great re-bulkers of non-residence, among so many distant cures, were not ashamed to be seen so quickly pluralists and non-residents themselves, to a fearful condemnation doubtless by their own mouths. And yet the main doctrine, for which they took such pay and insisted upon with more vehemence than the gospel, was but to tell us in effect that their doctrine was worth nothing, and the spiritual power of their ministry less available than bodily compulsion: persuading the magistrate to use it, as a stronger means to subdue and bring in conscience, than evangelical persuasion; distrusting the virtue of their own spiritual weapons, which were given them, if they be rightly called, with full warrant of sufficiency to pull down all thoughts and imaginations that exalt themselves against God. But while they taught compulsion without conviction, which long before they complained of as executed unchristianly against themselves; these intents are clear to have been no better than antichristian; setting up a spiritual tyranny by a secular power, to the advancing of their own authority above the magistrate whom they would have made their executioner to punish church-delinquencies, whereof civil laws have no cognisance.

"And well did their disciples manifest themselves to be no better than their teachers; trusted with committeeships and other gainful offices, upon their commendations for zealous and (as they stuck not to term them) godly men; but executing their places, like children of the devil, unfaithfully, unjustly, unmercifully, and where not corruptly, stupidly. So that between them, the teachers, and these, the disciples, there hath not been a more ignominious and mortal wound to faith, to piety, to the work of reformation, nor more cause of blaspheming given to the enemies of God and truth, since the first preaching of the reformation."

An Assembly of this stamp were admirably fitted to make a Confession of Faith and a form of church government for England and all coming generations. Parker says 'the far greater part of them are said to be men of no learning or reputation,' and no set of the clergy ever deserved it more. Lord Clarendon in his history, observes, 'about twenty of them were reverend and worthy persons, and episcopal in their judgments; but as to the remainder they were but pretenders to divinity; some were infamous in their lives and conversation, and most of them of very mean parts and learning, if not of scandalous ignorance, and of no other reputation than that of malice to

the Church of England.' Who does not feel bound to yield implicit belief to the opinions of such *learned, godly and judicious Divines*, especially when it is recollected that the discord was so great and violent among them, that they petitioned the two Houses of Parliament to appoint a day of *General Fasting and Prayer*, for divine direction, and spent six hours of that day in prayer, and two in preaching. At the close of the day, 'Mr. Henderson brought them to a sweet conference of the heat confessed in the Assembly, and other seen faults to be remedied, and the conveniency to preach against all sects, especially Anabaptists and Antinomians.' Are these the creed-makers on whom we blindly rely?

AN ALLEGORY.

A pilgrim journeying over the sands of India to visit the temple of Juggernaut and throw himself beneath the wheels of his car, became exceedingly faint with fatigue and hunger, thirst and solicitude. In this condition he sat down on the heated earth to rest his weary frame, and in hope that some traveller might give him food, or quench his raging thirst. Though sheltered from the blazing sun by no tree or cloud, cooled by no breeze, nor refreshed by any green landscape, or sound of murmuring stream, he bore his sufferings with uncomplaining patience, and only besought the god to restore his strength, that he might kneel before the temple, and give up his life in sacrifice according to his vow. While in this situation, fervently imploring his god for aid that he might fulfil his solemn engagement, he descries an Armenian merchant driving a camel richly laden with provision and cordials, but of a kind which every Bramin, from natural and acquired aversion, would sooner undergo death than taste. The Armenian, seeing the misery of the poor Hindoo, but fully aware of his constitutional and religious antipathies, offered him food and drink, at the same time conjuring him by his love of life and hope of a successful pilgrimage to partake of his store with freedom and cheerfulness. The Bramin, completely exhausted with long fasting and toil, and fully certain that the Armenian knew his uncontrollable abhorrence of his provisions, turned away his head in loathing and despair, and penetrated with the deepest sorrow at this mockery of kindness, extended his body on the sand, and died in great agony. When the Armenian returned to Calcutta and related the incidents which attended the death of the pilgrim, whom he found on the plain, amidst the bones of thousands, who had perished on their journey to the temple, his friends arraigned him before a native court with the murder of the devotee, because he had witholden the food he could have eaten, and offered him that which he could not eat, but which caused loathing, nausea, despair, and a most excruciating death. The Armenian, disdaining to conceal or palliate a single fact or circumstance, alleged in his justification that the God of the Christians acted in the same manner when he offered the provisions of the gospel to those who were perishing in

sin, without removing their aversion to this manna for the soul, but awfully embittering their death by this show of mercy; and that as the Missionaries had taught us 'to imitate God as dear children,' he had only been striving to be perfect as the Christian God. The court allowed that his plea would avail, if they had been Christians, but as they meant to be governed by impartial justice, they could give it no hearing. They moreover lamented that a doctrine so full of insincerity and barbarism was preached in any part of Indostan, and that it might be checked in its first stages, they ordered that he should be burned alive for his most unpardonable inhumanity and falsehood, and that his ashes should be collected and sent into all the countries of the east, in little boxes inscribed, "the doom of those who PRACTISE christianity."

EXCOMMUNICATION.

The Montrose Examiner announces the expulsion of Mrs. Elizabeth Brize from the Baptist Church in Greene, N. Y. for believing in the *restitution of all things*. She sustains a fair character, has for years been an esteemed member of the church, and is now excluded from the communion, *merely* because she worships the God of her fathers after the way which they call *heresy*. Elder Clark, who presided over the church at her condemnation, remarked, "you see, brethren, what the belief of sister Brize is; that is giving Christ the *lie*! and the Apostles! and all the Prophets! and even God himself!" After a few more observations of this character, the Elder asked if they could fellowship her, when they replied in the negative. The church would neither give her a letter stating the reasons of their conduct, nor hear aught she could say in her own defence. But her truly christian letter addressed to the church, and her unimpeached life and conversation plead most energetically in her favor, and show that her only *crime* is renouncing human guides for a Master in heaven.

NOTICES.

The Rev. Abner Kneeland of New York has issued proposals for printing by subscription, **ANCIENT UNIVERSALISM**, as taught by Christ and his apostles; in reply to a pamphlet, entitled "*Remarks on the distinguishing Doctrine of Modern Universalism, which teaches that there is no Hell and no punishment for the wicked after Death. By Adam Empe, A. M. Rector of St. James's Church, Wilmington, North Carolina.*" The work will be printed on good paper and handsome type, and will contain at least *sixty-four* pages octavo; and will be put to subscribers at *twenty-five* cents each.—Subscriptions received at this Office.

The Rev. Stephen R. Smith has removed to Philadelphia to become the pastor of the second Universalist Church in that city. The Rev. Pitt Morse, of Watertown, N. Y. has been invited to Philadelphia, to supply the place

of the Rev. Mr. Kneeland, who is now connected with the second Universalist Society in the city of New York.

Thursday last was appointed for the *Dedication* of the new Universalist Church in the island of Nantucket. We have not yet learned the particulars of the consecration, but shall give them in our next number.

NOTICE TO EDITORS.—*Let him that has stolen steal no more.* We say this to the *corps editorial* in general, and if they do not *regard* this caution, we shall take more direct means to expose their plagiarism.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Ancient notions concerning the government of this world, and the modern fancies which have grown out of them.

An opinion very early prevailed among men, that the universe was governed by two great, powerful and hostile spirits, one the author of all good, the other of evil, and that creation was ever distracted by their conflicting influences. The Chaldeans and Persians seem to have held this notion, and supposed them to be two independent principles. The prophet Isaiah in asserting the Unity of God refutes this doctrine: "That they may know from the rising of the sun and from the West, that there is none besides me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things." Isaiah xlv. 6, 7.

This doctrine of two spiritual rulers of this world was afterwards modified by men holding the good Being as supreme and the evil subordinate. It also came to be believed that Satan was originally a spirit of great dignity and purity, an inhabitant of the celestial mansions, from whence he was expelled in consequence of rebellion against the Most High. From the splendid prophetic scenery in Revelation xii. the poet Milton took his beautiful, but purely imaginary description of the war in heaven, terminating in the expulsion of Satan, and a third part of the angelical hierarchy. Yet expositors of every class are agreed that the sublimely figurative visions of John refer to far different subjects, from any such supposed transactions before the world began. Yet it is by such combinations of poetry, Scripture ill understood, and remote traditions of a barbarous age, that the modern notions about the devil, and his powerful influence in the affairs of men, are maintained. The more attentively the Scriptures are examined, with common sense and piety for our guide, the less support do they appear to give to these notions. And certainly the obviously evil tendency of some of these opinions is very unfavourable to their truth: they interfere with just views of the supreme majesty and unrivalled glory of the Lord of all; they produce destructive terrors and unreasonable apprehensions in the credulous and superstitious mind; they encourage extravagant and absurd pretensions of spiritual impostors, who can declaim about invisible matters without the dread of detection; they offer an excuse for the commission of the grossest crimes; they betray the sincere and pious into dreadful uncertainty as to the source of the most powerful impressions to which a reasoning being must be subject; and, finally, they conduct many to irremediable despair. The only effectual remedy for all this is to lead our Christian brethren to more just and rational views of religion, and make them consider the Scriptures as adapted to cultivate and improve the understanding, not to involve it in a world of fable and delusion.—*Ch. Reformer.*

FANATICISM LEADS TO INFIDELITY.

The Atheist knows no God at all; the superstitious none but what is monstrous and terrible; mistaking for cheatful, what is most kind and beneficent; for tyrannical, what is truly paternal; for mischievously inclined, what is full of providential care; for a being brutally savage and fierce, what is mere goodness itself. Shall then the atheist be accounted impious, and not the superstitious person more so? For myself, I had rather men should say there is no such person as Plutarch, than that he is a man inconstant, fickle, prone to anger, ready to avenge himself upon the slightest occasions, and full of indignation for mere trifles; and yet this is no more than the superstitious think of the Deity; whom of consequence they must as well hate as fear. They worship, indeed, and adore him; and so do men those very tyrants they would be glad of an opportunity to destroy. The atheist contributes, not in the least to superstition; but superstition, having given out so hideous an idea of the Deity, some have been frightened into the utter disbelief of any such being; because they think it is much better, nay, more reasonable, that there should be no Deity, than one whom they see more reason to hate, and abominate, than to love, honour and reverence. Thus inconsiderate men, shocked at the deformity of superstition, run into the other extreme.

Plutarch.

SOUTH AMERICA.

The "Dictator" of Paraguay, Don Gaspar Francia, has suppressed all the Convents or Houses of Religious Orders, which existed within the territories of the Republic, at the date of the decree. The fifth article of that document requires an exact inventory to be made of all the property belonging to them, and appropriates the whole to the State.

[This country was formerly wholly under the control of the Jesuits, and very little comparatively was known respecting it, as strangers were not suffered to enter, nor the inhabitants to leave its jurisdiction. The Convents or Houses of Religious Orders were suppressed in the decree, on the ground of their being "neither necessary nor useful.")

The Executive of Buenos Ayres has transmitted to the House of Representatives of that Republic the plan of a law, declaring that the right, which every man has, to worship the Divinity agreeably to his own conscience, is inviolable in the territory of the Republic. This broad and sound principle of religious toleration reflects the highest credit upon the government of our sister Republic, and furnishes a fresh proof of the happy and liberalizing influence of the republican system upon the human mind.

Dedication.—The *Universalist Meeting House* lately erected in the township of Brooklyn, Susquehanna county, Pa. will be opened for dedication on Thursday, the 17th of this month. Exercises to commence at 11 o'clock. It will be very acceptable to see our Brethren from a distance.

Montrose Examiner.

Miss Jane Hale of Versailles, Ken. lately put an end to her existence by jumping into a well.—She had just united herself to a Baptist church. When the family retired to bed they left her reading the New Testament; in the morning they found a note on the table stating that they might find her in the well.

Religious Association.—We are requested to state that an Association of Universalists will be organized in this city on the first Wednesday and Thursday of November.

Hudson Republican.

POETRY.



"Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord."

[SELECTED.]

IMMORTALITY.

Lift your loud voices in triumph on high,
 For Jesus hath risen, and man cannot die.

Vain were the terrors that gathered round him,
 And short the dominion of death and the grave;
 He burst from the fetters of darkness that bound him,
 Resplendent in glory, to live and to save.

Loud was the chorus of angels on high,
 The Saviour has risen, and man shall not die.

Glory to God in full anthems of joy;
 The being he gave us, death cannot destroy.

Sad were the life we must part with to-morrow,
 If tears were our birth-right, and death were our end;
 But Jesus has cheered the dark valley of sorrow,
 And bade us, immortal, to heaven ascend.

Lift then your loud voices in triumph on high,
 For Jesus hath risen, and man shall not die.

MY FATHER'S AT THE HELM.

'Twas when the sea, with awful roar,
 A little bark assailed,
 And pallid fear's distracting power
 O'er each on board prevail'd,

Save one, the captain's darling child,
 Who stedfast viewed the storm;
 And cheerful, with composure smiled
 At Danger's threatening frown.

"Why sporting thus," a seaman cried,
 "While terrors overwhelm?"
 "Why yield to fear?" the boy replied—
 "My FATHER'S at the helm."

RELIGION.

—True Religion
 Is always mild, propitious, and humble;
 Plays not the tyrant, plants no faith in blood,
 Nor bears destruction on her chariot-wheels;
 But stoops to polish, succour, and redress,
 And builds her grandeur on the public good.

MARRIED,

In Boston, at Trinity Church, on the 31st ult. by the Rev. Dr. Gardner, Samuel H. Huntington, Esq. of this city, to Miss Catharine H. Brinley, daughter of George Brinley, Esq. of the former place.

At East Hartford, on the 31st ult. Mr. Salmon Phelps, to Mrs. Ann G. Olmstead, daughter of Levi Goodwin, Esq.

At Manchester, on Sunday evening last, Mr. Edwin Hoffman to Miss Sophia Vibberts.

